



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

25c a Year

Devoted to The
High-School-College
Entrance
Scholarship Fund

THE NEW YORK

LATIN LEAFLET

Entered at the Post Office in Brooklyn as second-class matter, October 29, 1902

25 Issues

Every Penny of
Every Subscription
goes into the
Scholarship Fund

VOL III

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, JANUARY 12, 1903

No 61

TRUSTEES OF THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

ARTHUR S. SOMERS, Ex-Commissioner of Education
NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER, College Entrance Examination Board
FREDERICK D. MOLLENHAUER, Mollenhauer Sugar Refinery

Announcement

In No 63 of *The Leaflet*, January 26, 1903, acknowledgment will be made of all money received for the SCHOLARSHIP FUND since the last issue of the last school year.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Professor Morgan's Address Before The New York Latin Club

IN FOUR PARTS—PART I

The seventh meeting of the New York Latin Club, held as usual at the Hotel Albert, November 22d, 1902, was regarded by many of the fifty members who had the good fortune to be present, as the most notable and profitable in its history. After an appropriate reference to the loss to the Club and to *The Leaflet* caused by the death of Dr. Caskie Harrison, President Towle introduced Professor Morgan. Professor Morgan's catholicity of spirit was most gratifying to all those present, and it can have no better testimony than the honor which is conferred upon *The Leaflet* by his very generous permission to reproduce his address. He spoke as follows:

On the 24th of May, 1660, Mr. Samuel Pepys, the great English annalist, made the following entry in his diary:

"Up, and made myself as fine as I could, with the lining stockings on and wide canons that I bought the other day at Hague."

But some time later we find the following entry:
"31st.—To church; and with my mourning very handsome, and new periwig, make a great show."

Is there a tailor among us, or lover of fine clothes, who can tell us whether there is anything much more animating in a suit of mourning and a periwig than in a pair of imported stockings with wide canons? If not, why should Mr. Pepys have used the present tense "make" in his narrative of the one, but the past tense "made" in his narrative of the other?

Let us now go back some two thousand years and examine the familiar opening lines of Xenophon's *Anabasis*:

"To Darius and Parysatis are born two sons, the elder Artaxerxes, and the younger Cyrus." But in the next sentence: "Now when Darius lay sick and suspected that his end was nigh, he wished both his sons to be with him."

Why does the narrator put the commonplace registry of birth into the present tense, but employ the past to describe the longing of a dying father for his sons?

Here are questions in seeking answer to which we get but cold comfort from the school grammars, Greek or Latin, which we teachers have been so faithfully fumbling these many years. One tells us that the present is employed "to give a more animated statement of past events"; another that it is used "as a lively representation of the past"; a third informs us that "this usage, common in all language, comes from imagining past events as going on before our eyes". One of the very latest says: "In vivid narration the speaker may for the moment feel that he is living the past over again and so may use the present tense in describing events already past." Then follow three examples, and the third is the first sentence in the *Anabasis*! What? Did Xenophon feel that he was "living over again" the days when Parysatis was brought to bed of her two sons? Is Livy's soul enthralled by the vividness of past events when he gives us in his third chapter that long line of reigns and genealogies:

"Silvius deinde regnat; is Aeneas Silvium creat. Agrippa inde regnat. Proca deinde regnat; is Numitorem procreat; Numitori regnum Silviae gentis legat".

Not one whit more, I warrant, than the Evangelist when he wrote, using the *past* tense: "Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren."

But I am sure that I need not press this point further, for it must be perfectly obvious to you that the present tense in the sentences which I have quoted from Pepys, from Xenophon, and from Livy, is not accounted for under the usual treatment of the *Historical Present* in our school-books. The term itself is a bad one, for it does not suggest the vivid narration of past events which it undoubtedly is the function of the present tense sometimes to express; and the explanations are defective because they do not account for the statement, in this tense, of dull, inanimate, historical facts. It must be clear that we have here two distinct usages which ought not to be confused and treated under the same head in a single section of a grammar. There is nothing very new in what I am saying; and I fancy that the distinction which should be drawn is familiar to not a few of you. If I repeat it here, it

is because new school grammars and editions of the authors continue to ignore it, and because I remember how absurdly inconsistent the section on the historical present and the examples under it used to seem to me in the grammars which I studied when I was a schoolboy. The distinction was drawn by Professor Lane in his Latin Grammar, and it is recognized by Professor Gildersleeve in his invaluable new book on the Syntax of Classical Greek. Into the question whether the two kinds of presents are the same in origin or not, I do not now enter. I am talking now merely of usage by the Greek and Latin authors in their writings as we have them; not of the origins of usage. And I will venture here to pause and to interject the remark that I am strongly of opinion that some of us are attaching too much attention to "origins" in a good many departments of our teaching. The first and all important thing is that our pupils, whether in schools or in colleges, should be able to read the authors with understanding and appreciation—and it will in general be found that this twofold task—and particularly the latter part of it, the appreciation of the authors—is all that a schoolboy, or a college student until he gets a good deal more than half-way through his college course, can accomplish. He ought to be taught what each word or phrase meant to the writer who penned it; he need know nothing about the semi-civilized Indo-European who first mouthed it out, or something like it. He must know the manners and customs of the time about which he is studying, not necessarily their evolution up from prehistoric man. It matters very little to him how the adjective *nobilis* is formed; whether from *no-* and *-bilis* or from a suppositious **nobus* and *-ilis*; but it ought to be impressed upon him that the word doesn't mean *noble* at all; just as he ought to know that when people called Cicero a *novus homo* they didn't mean that he was a *bourgeois* or of a low, mean family. And so with our present tense; never mind its origin till much later, if ever; but let us make sure that our students see what it indicates.

There is, then, in the usage of the Greek and Latin authors an *Annalistic* or *Note-book* present, which is employed in brief historical or personal memoranda, "to note incidents day by day or year by year as they occur." Of this present I have given examples already, and those of you who keep diaries make use of it very often. And there is also a *Present of Vivid Narration*, a rhetorical device, used consciously to represent with animation a past action as if it were going on at the time of writing.

One of the best examples of this kind of present is to be found in the first book of the *Æneid* in the description of that storm which *Æolus* blows up at the request of Juno:

"When this was said, with spear reversed he smote the mountain on its side; and instantly the winds, as it were a battle line, rush forth and sweep over the lands in a cyclone. They've settled on the sea (observe the perfect definite), and *Eurus* and *Notus* side by side upheave it all from its very bottom—*Africus*, too, teeming with the hurricane—and huge are the waves which they roll to the strand. Then ensues the cry of men and the creaking of cordage. Clouds of a sudden pluck away the daylight from the *Teucrians'* eyes; dark night broods upon the sea. The heaven hath thundered (perfect definite again) and the ether flashes with fire on fire."

Wonderful indeed is the vivifying effect of this present when it is rightly used and in moderation. It can be overworked: witness those English novels written by "the Duchess", a great favorite, I believe, with the ladies, though, of course, men never read her. I am told that the present of vivid narration is the only tense which she employs. But we must beware of seeing a vivid present where it is not really found; and this brings me to another passage which stands a little earlier in the same book of the *Æneid*.

The goddess Juno, you remember, utters an impassioned complaint at the apparent escape of the Trojans from her vengeance, and then:

Talia flammato secum dea corde volutans,
Nimborum in patriam, loca feta furentibus
Austris,

Æoliā venit.

"To *Æolia* doth she come." Here indeed in *venit* we do have an example of the present of vivid narration. But what follows? I translate thus:

"Here, in a cavern huge, King *Æolus* subduces unto his rule the struggling winds and sounding tempests, bridling them with chains and in a dungeon. They in resentment chafe about the barriers while the mountain mightily resounds; high in his hold sits *Æolus*, sceptre in hand, and calms their spirits and abates their angry passions." Now it is not uncommon to hear these six presents, *premit*, as historical presents, like *venit*; but they are far *fremat*, *fremunt*, *sedet*, *mollit* and *temperat* explained from being such. The passage contains a description of the functions of the god of the winds, who is of course thought of by the poet as an active existing divinity. He is part of the machinery of the gods, and any ancient reader of Virgil who believed in the imported Greek mythology must believe in *Æolus* along with the rest. No room for a historical present here, for we are dealing with pure present time. And the next sentence, as it happens, contains a point of syntax which is, in my opinion, constantly misinterpreted even in our best editions. It reads thus:

Ni faciat, maria ac terras caelumque profundum:

Quippe ferant rapidi secum verrantque per auras.

"Imagine him not doing so, they would surely whirl along with them impetuously seas, lands, and the deep vault of heaven, and sweep them through the air."

This conditional sentence is not a "condition contrary to fact"; it does not denote unfulfilled or non-occurrent action. It is true that in the old Latin of Plautus we do find such conditions sometimes expressed by the present subjunctive; it is true also that we find in Augustan poets, perhaps in Virgil, some imitations of this usage. But ours is not one of them; it is nothing but the common use of the subjunctive in a future condition; it is equivalent to "If he should cease to restrain them, they would whirl forth".